

CAI-Wisconsin Chapter

# COMMUNITY LEADER

*News for the New American Neighborhood*

## PAIN AT THE PUMP

*How is your Association's budget being impacted?*

## DRYER VENT CLEANING

*Protect your tenants.*

## WHAT IS SOFT WASHING?

*Get your property ready for spring.*

## FRESH VS SALTWATER POOLS

*Which one works better for you?*

## YOUNG TREES

*Take care of your trees.*

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Volume XXI, Issue 1 - Spring 2022  
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*News for the New American Neighborhood*



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# PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



I am so excited to become the newly elected President of CAI-WI! I have been in the industry for over 20 years and a proud member of CAI since 2008. In 2017, I joined the CAI-WI Board of Directors and since then I have served alongside dedicated and active members. As our Chapter continues to grow, I am excited to help expand our goals and assist in the success of our Chapter.

I would like to thank Todd Sarauer, Past President, for his time and dedication to the Chapter for the last two years. Todd helped our Chapter fight through Covid and continue with success.

We are looking forward to the upcoming 2022 Conference and Tradeshow in April. After nearly two years of disruption and change, we are finally moving forward with shifting back to connecting with one another. With this in person event, I look forward to engaging our membership and seeing everyone's smiling faces.

In May, I will be attending the CAI National Conference and Exposition in Orlando, FL. I am excited to be accepting an award at National, on behalf of the WI Chapter, for 2021 CAI Chapter Growth! We are so proud that out of the National Chapters we are number one in retaining and adding new members.

Way to go Wisconsin!!!

I look forward to serving as your President and can't wait to see everyone at events throughout the year!

*Sincerely,*

Sara Moker, CMCA, AMS, PCAM

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# PAIN AT THE PUMP. PAIN ON ASSOCIATION BUDGETS.

by Brandon Grosz and Carissa Pezewski



Nobody wants to see another social media post about the price of gas, a picture of the gas price at the pump, hearing the information on the news, it is everywhere you go. Often the focus is on the cost of putting gas into your personal vehicle, not the trickle-down effect happens with the price of petroleum goes up. Especially leading up to the summer months as refineries start to switch over to the summer mixtures that usually adds 15 to 20 cents per gallon. Summer-blend fuel is also more expensive to make than winter-blend fuel. First, the production process takes longer and overall yield of gasoline per barrel of oil is lower.

The most common fiscal year for associations runs from January 1 to December 31, although not all associations run their fiscal year with the calendar year and what is occurring in 2022 most are probably wishing they were on a different fiscal year. If an association has a fiscal year that has not begun yet they have time to create their budget to accommodate the current price increases that are happening for the services, utilities, projects and needs of that association. When writing budgets, inflation and price increases are thought of in that budget workshop, but outside influences such as natural disasters, foreign issues and pandemics cannot be predicted and may not be factored in. Associations are seeing the pain at the pump, creating a pain on their budgets in all aspects.

The landscape contract may have been signed last fall for this upcoming season or it is a multi-year contract and the contract price was put into the budget with a little wiggle room. If the contract was not fully reviewed or quickly glossed over, there could be terms if gas rose above a certain price to add on a percentage to the contract and if that was not taken into consideration, the landscape budget could be already overbudget before the season starts. If an association did not sign a contract last fall and have been shopping out vendors, the pricing now will be higher with the current gas prices. The idea of gas prices affecting landscaping may not cross everyone's mind, but a landscape firm has to drive the staff and equipment from job site to job site, the mowers may be gas powered, same with

the weed whackers and other pieces of equipment.; this is all overhead that needs to be covered in the cost of the services provided.

There are many building products that are made with oil: particleboard, asphalt roof shingles, paint, plywood, carpets, insulation, etc. If an association is looking into a roof replacement project in the upcoming months, the shingle price that existed maybe when the budget was written, and a little inflation factored in may not be the same cost that is seen in the bids and final contracts now. The special assessment to fund the project may have been levied and now it will not cover the price of the project, the amount expected to take from reserves to pay for the project now has doubled. This is leaving Boards in a situation where another special assessment may have to be levied, the anticipated special assessment is now higher than discussed, more money is needed from the reserves and how much is too much to take out, does the project get put on hold to see if prices change in six months, eight months, 12 months...

If the association is responsible for trash and recycling the pricing of the monthly pick-up will fluctuate with the current market. All the extra fees that are on the bill will hurt the association's budget, especially the fee for fuel/environmental charge when the cost of petroleum goes up. It all goes back to the budgeting, the contract price was reviewed and adjusted for price increases, but the price of gas now is not near what the price of gas was back in 2021.

So, what can be done to pay for the increased costs that not expected when making your budgets late last year? Board Members can work with their property managers/ finance committees to review projects that are a must this year and items that can wait until next year. Another is working with your vendor, if you have a good and strong working relationship, on spreading out that fuel surcharge fee.

The pain at the pump is a pain on association budgets as gas prices are the last thing managers and board members really look at in the forecasting of budgets. Depending on how long prices remain hovering around the \$4.00 per gallon mark in the Wisconsin region; managers and board members will need to factor in the surcharge and higher prices into budgets moving forward.

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# HAVE YOU CLEANED YOUR DRYER VENT LATELY?

by Kyle Konetzke

Dryer vents, they are the easiest to forget about or skip on the to-do list and can be a tricky item to handle for garden style associations since they typically service a single unit but extend beyond the “cube of air” and into the common element. Without clearing them out periodically, you could end up with clothes that will not dry and even worse, a fire hazard. How are they handled and what should you do if your clothes are not drying like they used to?

Dryer vents in garden style communities typically service a single unit and start at the rear of the clothes dryer. The vent moves through the wall or ceiling to vent moisture and air particulates from the dryer out of the building. On the exterior of the building, the vent hole is usually covered by some type of vent cover, which are popularly either a louvre style or grate style. They can be located on either an exterior wall, or on the roof of the building. Both styles of dryer vent covers can trap lint from the dryer and prevent them from properly venting the moisture which also traps hot-air and lint. Since moisture cannot escape, your clothes will not dry and if homeowners are unaware of the clog, they could continue to run their dryer which traps the hot-air

and quickly becomes a fire hazard, as the lint heats up. In high-rise communities, this problem is compounded as dryer vents all feed into a main exhaust vent, which if clogged can cause everyone’s clothes to take longer to dry.

According to the National Fire Protection Association about 3,000 dryers catch fire each year, causing more than \$238 million in fire damage. This makes them one of the leading causes of house fires. The number one cause of dryers catching fire is not cleaning out your dryer vents on a regular basis.

Always check your governing documents first to be sure whose responsibility it is to perform this maintenance. Typically, they will fall under a homeowner responsibility if they only service a single unit, but since they also affect common elements, many associations have them cleaned at regular intervals to protect and preserve the property.

*Continued on page 7*



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The cleaning process typically requires a vent cleaning company to use a ladder to access the vents on the roof or a high exterior wall – some may even need access to the roof. An air compressor, and a long air hose with a special bit on the end is used in the cleaning process. There is more than one way to clean dryer vents. The most common method is where the vendor will remove the exterior vent cover if necessary and then insert the air hose into the vent. The special bit blows a concentrated air stream backwards towards the opening, and as the operator pulls the hose out of the vent the air blows the lint with it to create a clean air duct.

When an association schedules the cleaning for the entire community, they are most always cleaned from the exterior of the building inwards, so as not to disturb homeowners or require access to units on the day of service. This addresses much of the potential fire hazard, however, this does not always reach far enough into the unit to completely clear the built-up lint. In certain cases, the contractor may need to service it from the interior as well. If your association requires homeowners to schedule their own cleaning, each unit should make sure to get their dryer vents are cleaned from the inside out on a regular basis, as well as having your dryer’s interior cleaned to keep it operating its best and reduce the amount of lint that escapes into the vent.

Owners in a high-rise community are responsible for getting their vents cleaned, from their unit to the main vent, on a regular basis. When scheduling a cleaning from the inside of your unit it will require the technician to access the vent by pulling out your drier and disconnecting it from the vent. Doing this helps protect the common elements and all those who live in the building.

Homeowners can check with their board or property management company to inquire about how they handle dryer vent cleaning. An important tip for Homeowners to remember is that if your clothes are taking more than one cycle to dry, please be sure to contact somebody to have the dryer vents inspected before continuing to use your dryer. Not doing so could lead to catastrophic consequences for yourself and your association. Response time for such requests can vary depending on the issue and company contacted. Please do your best to remain patient and use a local laundry mat to complete your laundry until repairs have been completed.

---

***KYLE KONETZKE** grew up in Oconomowoc, Wisconsin and graduated from OHS in 2005. He has two associates degrees. Kyle has his CMCA and real estate license. He has worked at Prospect Management Company for 2 years.*

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# WHAT IS SOFT WASHING?

by Nick DeMark

Soft washing, also known as low-pressure washing, is a safe and effective process used by professional pressure washing companies for cleaning a variety of exterior surfaces on buildings and homes. In the soft washing process, a combination of cleaning solutions is gently applied to the surface with low pressure and given ample time to destroy any algae or fungus build-up. These solutions, along with dirt, stains, and other grime (such as, mold, algae, pollen, and moss), are then gently and thoroughly rinsed off with clean, low-pressure water. The solutions also remove organic growth from the root for longer-lasting results.

## THE BENEFITS OF SOFT WASHING YOUR HOME OR BUILDINGS

Any structure's exterior is exposed to natural and man-made elements, such as sunlight, rain, wind, snow, dirt, pollution, smoke. These contaminants cause unsightly staining, and potential surface damage which can diminish curb appeal and lower the value of your property. Soft washing is one of the least costly ways to improve a property's appearance, offering a great return on your investment and increases the chances of sale.

Soft washing safely and thoroughly cleans exterior surfaces, including roof, deck, patio, windows, siding, and fencing. It is extremely gentle on the exterior materials of a structure, helping to maintain the paint, siding, and masonry longer. Soft washing is also the only method to safely and gently clean traditional and synthetic stucco, also known as EIFS or Dryvit. It's extremely effective because it offers special cleaning chemicals that can tackle particular stains that are common to specific siding surfaces. With soft washing, you will notice longer-lasting results on all the exterior surfaces of your home and property.

Soft washing also won't strip off your landscape soil or protective mulch. It won't damage your plants with forceful over-spray. Soft washing is eco-friendly and safe for plants, pets, and children. It effectively kills live contaminants so they won't pose any risk to your family's health and won't return quickly to your exterior surfaces.

## WHY DO I NEED A PROFESSIONAL ROOF WASH?

Your roof is your protection from the outside elements that float through the air. Throughout the year, it takes a beating from the seasons and weather. Over time if your roof is not properly taken care of, the life of your roof could build up mold, dirt, and other invasive contaminants.

## WHY IS SOFT WASHING MY ROOF IMPORTANT?

- Prevents pricey repairs – Regular cleaning can prevent premature damage from algae that eats at your shingles. Often, this algae presents itself as black streaking on your shingles.
- Roof washing is one of the lowest cost maintenance tasks you can choose, with a large return on investment when it comes to curb appeal and marketability.
- Extend your roof's life – The shingles and foundation will be saved on your home with a roof cleaning.

## THE BENEFITS OF PRESSURE WASHING YOUR CONCRETE

After a winter season of grime and stains attacking your concrete, neglecting to remove the accumulation of dirt can cause serious problems, costly repairs, and even permanent damage. Pressure washing prevents permanent damage and is one of the most cost effective options for restoring large exterior surface areas. Compared to traditional cleaning solutions, pressure washing can quickly and easily remove grime with little impact on the environment or the surface material.

Pressure washing concrete helps eliminate mold, mildew, algae, and moss. It also helps lighten or eliminate stains that accumulate over time which will help brighten up the curb appeal of any home or structure.

The pressure washing process uses powerful degreasers and enzymes to attack organic growth or stains which means your concrete will be free of algae growth for a longer period of time. It is important to have your concrete washed at least once a year to promote longevity.

---

**NICK DEMARK** is the President and Owner of DeMark's Window and Pressure Cleaning. He can be reached at 262-894-2057 or by email at [office@demarks.com](mailto:office@demarks.com).

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# POOLS...SALTWATER OR CHLORINE?

by Jennifer Arellano



Outdoor pools will be opening soon. As the weather warms up, communities begin to feel excited about being able to enjoy the pools and spend more time outdoors. Many of the outdoor pools found in Wisconsin are the traditional chlorine pools. Recently, I came across a pool transitioning to saltwater. While this is an indoor pool, it made me question what about outdoor pools? What is the difference? Why would anyone consider switching their system? After speaking with professionals, I was directed to information that answered these questions. Whether chlorine or saltwater system is being used, both have advantages and disadvantages. The type of system used will ultimately come down to what an association feels is best for their pool and community.

Traditional chlorine pools use store bought chlorine. Saltwater pools create their own chlorine. Pool grade salt is added to a chlorine generator. By running the saltwater through two electrically charged plates, it converts the water to chlorine that is needed to sanitize the pool. Water testing is the same with both pools. Most saltwater pools have a liquid chlorine system backup system. The backup is in case the saltwater system fails or is needed in lower temperatures.

There are advantages and disadvantages to both types of pools. If the pool is already a traditional chlorine pool, it could be cheaper to leave it as is. Transitioning to a saltwater water system does have initial costs for set up. This cost could range from \$1,000 to \$5,000, and the cost is dependent on the pool size. There is little to maintain with a chlorine system as it requires little equipment. Some people enjoy the smell of the chlorine, but it also an irritant to others. Chlorine pools can be irritating to the skin, eyes, nose and throat. People with asthma or allergies sometimes find chlorine pools trigger their allergies or asthma so they are not able to enjoy the pool. Traditional pools can also bleach swimwear. With an outdoor pool, traditional pools can be kept open in cooler temperatures, especially if heated.

Saltwater pools daily are cheaper to operate. With rising costs and availability to chemicals, a cost savings can be seen with a saltwater pool system. Chlorine for the year can cost almost five times as much as the pool grade salt needed for the year. The cost of chlorine is dependent on the type, liquid or tablets, and the current market rate.

The lighter chlorine created in a saltwater system does not have a strong sent. It is gentler on the skin and may not be as irritating to people who may have allergies or asthma. Often times the water of a saltwater pool is described as feeling "softer". The "softer" feeling can be related to the fewer chloramines generated from a saltwater system. Chloramines, or combined chlorine, give off the strong chlorine smell and are irritants to the skin and eyes. The saltwater system can possibly erode the pool faster than chlorine. The equipment needs to be checked and cleaned regularly to maintain the system. A saltwater system cannot produce the chlorine needed under 60-degree temperatures. With the backup system, it would take over when the saltwater system is unable to work.

Chlorine or saltwater pools can both be seen throughout Wisconsin. While most saltwater pools are found inside due to the cool temperatures in our state at times during the pool season, saltwater system can be used outdoors as well. Preference on the system used is based on the community. Since there are cooler temperature days, most saltwater systems are found indoors. If anyone is considering a change in system, research the costs and weigh the advantages and disadvantages before making a choice.

There are some great resources on finding additional information on saltwater and chlorine systems. You can start by contact your local inspector and pool vendor. The local inspector would be able to give you information on requirements. The pool vendor knows your pool best and could assist with any questions and estimates on transitioning a pool if you may be considering a change. While communities begin to reopen outdoor pools, no matter the style, we look forward to spending more time outdoors and in swimming pools with family and friends.

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**JENNIFER ARELLANO** is a Certified Property Manager of Community Associations with Prospect Management Company. She can be reached at [jarellano@pmcwi.com](mailto:jarellano@pmcwi.com).

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# EARLY CARE SETS TREES UP FOR SUCCESS

by John Sepulveda, Certified Arborist

From the moment trees are planted there are steps you can take to set them up for a healthy and long life. Good care starts at planting. Making sure the tree is planted correctly will help to avoid problems in the future. A tree that is planted too low or too high will be more prone to unnecessary stress that will make it an easier target for disease or pests. Trees planted too low can be susceptible to rot in the lower trunk, to limited essential gas exchange, and growth of stem girdling roots that will damage the tree in time. Plant a tree too high and it can damage the root plate, root flare and create an unstable tree. After planting, make sure the tree is situated properly and well supported. If necessary, install stakes and loose ties to help prevent leaning, which can affect the tree's growth later in life. Then, water well.

The next step in caring for your young tree is to schedule or perform structural pruning every two to three years to promote good branch structure. The timing can vary with different types of trees, and one of Hoppe's certified arborists can always answer questions about this.

Some trees are prone to poor structure if they are allowed to grow unrestricted. Trees like lindens, some maples, and Callery pears can develop weak branch unions in the inner canopy, which can lead to branches dying and branch failure. This tree defect is called bark inclusion. Included bark occurs where two limbs grow close to each other and create a weak spot that is prone to ripping and decay. Starting structural pruning when the tree is young will help prevent failures due to weak branch unions.

As your tree grows into a young adult tree it is important to keep up with structural pruning to reduce formation of codominant leads. Codominant leads are branches that have grown at a relatively close rate to the point where either one could take over and be the main stem. Included bark can form with codominant leads, and as noted before, can leave the tree more prone to failure as it grows.

They also become trickier to remove as the tree gets older, particularly if the branches are allowed to grow for too long. Issues caught early can be corrected with minimal damage to the tree. The longer that suspect branches are allowed to grow, the larger the wound will be when one of the leads is pruned and the larger the gap in the remaining canopy. Good structure also helps by training the tree to focus energy on growing in a desired direction, away from obstacles such as houses and buildings. Overall, being proactive in tree care for growth and structure will help you get the most out of your tree and aid in keeping it around for generations to come.

*JOHN SEPULVEDA is a Certified Arborist with Hoppe Tree Company in southeast Wisconsin. He can be reached at 414.257.2111.*



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# Welcome to the **CONDO CORNER?**

## Welcome to Condo Corner,

a forum where you can share a story or ask advice on a pertinent issue in your Association. Our crew of CAI-WI industry professionals - comprised of committees, managers, and contractors - are standing at the ready to answer your question. Forward your submission to the email below to be considered for the next issue!

### Q: Hello Condo Crew —

I've recently been appointed to the Board of Directors of our community association and two of the five directors are CAI members. The remaining three of us would like our own individual memberships, but struggle with allowing for it in the budget since we already have two members. Is it really worth having all of us obtaining our own individual memberships?

*Bob R.*

### A: Dear Bob —

We can answer that question in one word - **yes!** CAI can help the entire board learn, achieve and excel in the governance of your association. Community Associations Institute is an international membership organization dedicated to building better communities. With over 40,000 members, CAI has 63 chapters worldwide. Whether you are homeowner leader, a property manager or a business partner, CAI can benefit everyone who works with and for your association. CAI provides information, education and resources to the homeowner volunteers who govern communities and the professionals who support them. CAI membership can help you strengthen your network, share best practices and help your community thrive by meeting industry professionals and leaders.

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